DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 623 RC 019 593

AUTHOR Fedje, Laurie; Scoggins, Joyce
TITLE Ma, Pa, School Folks and Kids: Working a Patchwork to a Complete "Heart."
PUB DATE Mar 94
NOTE 11p.; In: Montgomery, Diane, Ed. Rural Partnerships: Working Together. Proceedings of the Annual National Conference of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES) (14th, Austin, Texas, March 23-26, 1994); see RC 019 557.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *Behavior Change; *Change Strategies; *Coping; *Daily Living Skills; Elementary Education; *Individual Development; Parent Participation; Regular and Special Education Relationship; Rural Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Social Skills Training; Student Empowerment; Wyoming

ABSTRACT

Teachers at a small rural elementary school developed a curriculum to help children acquire life coping skills. Children learn responsible behavior and gain independence through discussion of "Heart" concepts, problem-solving, and drawing and writing assignments. "Heart" concepts are taught on a daily basis in the special education resource classroom and on a weekly basis in regular classrooms. Concepts include responsibility; a positive attitude; self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-discipline; effective communication skills; friendships; and effective problem-solving skills. The principal, social worker, counselor, paraprofessionals, and playground staff are also involved in facilitating small-group discussions focusing on program concepts. During group discussions, concepts are developed into appropriate topic sentences for writing or themes for drawing assignments. Parents are encouraged to participate in classroom sessions after being trained by staff. Included is a case study of a student who participated in the program and progressed from placement in a self-contained classroom because of emotional problems to mainstreaming into regular classrooms within 1 year. Appendices include an overview of curriculum goals and concepts, a description of attitudes of the "Heart," and academic skill gains of sixth-grade special-education students participating in the program. (LP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Diane Montgomery
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Presented By Laurie Fedje
Co-Presenter: Joyce Scoggins
Sagewood Elementary School
2451 Shattuck, Casper, Wy. 82601

ED 369 623

MA, PA, SCHOOL FOLKS AND KIDS: WORKING A PATCHWORK TO A COMPLETE "HEART"

I. Introduction:

Tumultuous societal change has a habit of creating educational frontiers for workers in the "trenches." Long before documented studies have their say, master teachers can often tell us how children are changing and what they need. With the breakdown of the family in today's society, both children and families need to be involved if education is to have meaning and application in real life. Since there are no "experts" in living life, educators must be willing to be people first, unwilling to hide behind a role as an educational "expert." New frontiers require new visions: our vision is that of developing the "Hearts" of children in ways which are personally empowering. This article offers the story of our practical experience, documentation limited to our own school, and the hope of encouraging others to record their own experiences with working a patchwork to a complete "Heart."

II. Purpose of Presentation:

Collaboration between regular and special education has always posed special challenges. Children today are dealing not only with learning problems, but with devastating abuses which threaten to become the norm. We present a team approach to helping children develop and apply coping skills for school, home, and community. "Developing the Hearts of Children" (Copyright by Laurie Fedje, 1992) is a social skills curriculum which we use for collaborating in regular classrooms. The "Heart" curriculum consists of a discussion, problem solving, drawing assignment, and written language approach to helping children learn responsible behaviors and gain life independence. Our team draws in our social worker, counselor, principal, and parents as facilitators to help students cope with poverty, social problems, and classroom expectations. Problems which generate feelings of helplessness and acute stress for our staff can be shared with families who help carry the load and help
develop options. As the team becomes more comfortable with teaching to the

RC 019593

Rationale:

1. What Do We Mean By "Heart?"

"Heart" refers to the mind, will, and emotions---to the deepest, most inner part of a person. "Heart" has been used to mean "the seat of life or strength." "Heart" can also mean mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding. Attitudes developed in the "Heart" form the basis for learning, interaction, and for dealing with life.

2. Why Do We Deal With the "Heart?"

Personal change comes from within and is motivated by the desire to find and develop the unique "self," not from external manipulation of events or conditions. Educators can be powerful people who manipulate the school environment to reach goals which they feel are important. Programs such as "Learn to Earn" pay children for doing their school work, but neglect the most powerful tool at hand: personal empowerment through developing the identity of children. We let children and families know we think they are capable of solving their problems, that we can learn from their experiences, and that we hope to develop the home/school relationship which will lead to success.

A complete "Heart" will continue to contribute to others long after the manipulations of external rewards by powerful educators are gone. Failure to develop the "Heart" results in the failure to empower children through personal, living education (education used in life). Educators must recognize that we may provide our children the last hope for normal "attachment" to others, and that the time spent in preparing a "Heart" is not lost, but is an immeasurable investment.

3. What Do We Hope to Gain Through our "Heart" program?

Personal empowerment takes place in person to person interaction, and is practiced in real life situations. School and home responsibilities are important. We hope to help students and families develop attitudes which are personally empowering.

We hope to see students develop: a strong sense of self, responsible behaviors leading to behavioral and academic excellence, the self discipline necessary to achieve their own goals, honest communication, positive friendships, and the desire to share with and contribute to the group. We hope to see students who have emotional problems gain control and remain in the least restrictive school setting. We hope to help school staff share and contribute in personal ways which build community, lessen stress, and encourage academic excellence. We hope to see families sharing with school through commitment to friendship, partnership, strong family ties, and an involved community.

III. Project Description:

First Essential, Common Goals: At Sagewood Elementary, school staff involved with developing the "Hearts" of children are in agreement regarding program goals

and methods. We believe that the team needs each other in order to meet the needs of students; we also believe students and families can solve their own problems but mutual support can benefit all. The seemingly abstract concepts can be accomplished in some very concrete ways. We follow a written curriculum but it is only a guide to facilitate work which meets the needs of the group in developing personal identity and establishing positive relationships.

*** See Appendix A: Overview of Curriculum Goals and Concepts**

Structure:

The "Heart" concepts are taught on a daily basis in the resource classroom and on a weekly basis in the regular classrooms. The classroom teacher and the resource teacher team during class meetings to present target concepts. The principal, social worker, counselor, paraprofessionals, and playground staff help facilitate small group discussion as available. Concepts are then developed into an appropriate topic sentence for paragraph/theme writing or a topic for a drawing assignment. Family members are welcome to sit in on the sessions, but can only facilitate if they have been trained by staff. Our objective is to involve as many people as possible in offering choices to children and in helping them to make the most positive choices for themselves. Our approach continually comes back to simple concepts: "<u>What do you need</u>? <u>What do you choose to do</u>? <u>What do you have to offer</u>?" Each student carries the responsibility for choices made, yet has the right to begin each day (or each class) as a new chance for success. We have seen a very powerful community develop out of our structured communication and writings.

A suggested progression is:

1. Overview Goals and Concepts: Identify target areas.
2. Group Discussion of Concepts and Selected Topic Sentences
3. Drawing Assignments: Useful for developing ideas, to relieve stress, anxiety
4. Writing Assignments: Paragraph writing, theme development
5. Student Self Checking: Am I growing as a person and as a student?

IV. <u>Rural Focus</u>:

I have learned from the Navajo people in rural New Mexico that strong personal and family "identity" can be the foundation for an empowered lifestyle which can overcome all odds. This has become the basis for "Heart." School and family partnerships can help make the most of dwindling resources while meeting the needs of students. If we are to meet their needs, we must begin to ask questions and listen to the families whom we serve. When we listen, we team in empowering students to become "invested" in our school. Through Family Night Activities in which students teach skills to their families, we build a basis for sharing and learning about each other. Parents and school staff have become closer as everyone works to help children refine the identity and purpose which has long been a part of rural living: "We are on our own, but we are not alone."

*** See Appendix B, for a description of " Attitudes of the Heart"**

V. **Data:** Teachers have been open to integration which results in a less stressful classroom environment. Our problem solving and steps to self control have become part of our school discipline program. We have learned that:

1. Less control is more control; respect given is respect returned.
2. Given the tools, all students can achieve.
3. Pride in achievement becomes internalized as students meet their own goals.
4. Goals are reached by personal choice, not by external pressure.
5. Group problem solving helps students build relationships, achieve academically, prevent negative choices, and take control of their life.

Student Outcomes at My Home School:

* **See Appendix C:** "Heart" Program Review

CASE STUDY: K J

In January of 1993, KJ came from Pennsylvania to live with his father in Casper (divorced from KJ's mom 8 years earlier). A 5th grader, KJ's school placement had been a self contained class for students with emotional problems. He had recently been placed in a mental institute for evaluation. Because KJ was so out of control, his mother and her boyfriend drove him to Wyoming to live with his father. KJ was placed in my classroom by the special request of his stepmother, who is a special education consultant in Casper. KJ was with us for 2 weeks when his mother was murdered by her boyfriend back in Pennsylvania. KJ attended the funeral with his father and then had to work to settle into a new life in Wyoming, with no hope of escape.

KJ's IQ is within the normal range, with a 26 point spread between verbal and performance, the latter being the strongest suit. He was functioning well below grade level when given pretests in January. (See KJ's Pre/Post test scores, Appendix C: Heart Program Review). Entrance level behaviors included screaming profanities, head banging on the walls, attacking students, refusal to work, destroying his work, refusal to come in from recess, and refusal to comply with authority. KJ's family was able to communicate with us on a daily basis, and they also did constant problem solving with KJ to help him see "a new way of dealing with life." We worked together to develop KJ's Heart, always dealing with him in the spirit of the law (using common sense!) rather than the letter of the law.

KJ has progressed in one year's time to being mainstreamed in all classes except written language. He has successfully played on a basketball team for the first time in his life. He has written, produced, and presented stories on our Sage TV

productions. KJ has been able to maintain friendships, take orders, complete classwork and homework, ask for help, and visit over problems to find solutions. Steps to self control used to be an hourly occurrence for KJ, now it is a rare occasion when he is not calm enough to problem solve. KJ's family reports he is much more fun to be around now; his stepmother says she no longer dreads weekends at home. There is still room for growth, but KJ is now able to follow a new path and enjoy sharing life with others.

VI. Practical Applications:

Our strategies can be used by anyone willing to talk with students and families about important life and school issues. Teachers can apply our program through written language assignments, journal writing, drawing assignments, problem solving and thinking skills development, and practice in verbal expression, group discussion, and role playing. Our straightforward approach has been used by teachers because it is simple and addresses problems which otherwise are not confronted. When planning your program, simply address the following questions:

1. What do the students need to function better as students? As people?
2. What do I need to be comfortable in this classroom?
3. Who do I need to be on my "team?" Who is willing? Who is able? (Consider families, staff)
4. In which of the goal areas is there a block to effective learning right now?
5. How much time will I devote to these goals? Will my methods include discussion, writing, drawing, or my own combination of work?

VII. Conclusion: Classrooms develop into a place of support as students work together to develop identity, solve personal problems, and make academic gains. Students learn to contribute to others, to their families, and to their communities.

My "Heart" has shown me that I need others. I have learned that the contribution people make to my life is a precious gift to be guarded and nurtured. I have also learned the most important lesson of my teaching career: **We are unique and have but ourselves to offer, but it is everything that we are and all that we have, and we are of worth.**

Appendix A, Overview of Curriculum Goals and Concepts:
(Includes a Sample Topic Sentence and Drawing Assignment for each Goal Area)

1. Responsibility:

*Responsibility: a job or duty I must do.

*Independent Behavior: a task I can do *for* myself *by* myself.

*Dependent Behavior: Tasks I make others do for *me* that I could do for myself.

*People in Authority have the responsibility to see that their job is carried out, and they have the right to be obeyed.

* Freedom is the right of each person to do what he wants, unless it interferes with the rights of others.

Sample Topic Sentence: I am a master at several independent behaviors (at home, at school).

Sample Drawing Assignment: Blaming is not an option, but I tried!

2. Attitudes:

* Attitudes refer to thoughts, feelings, or ideas about life situations (positive or negative).

Sample Topic Sentence: Explain: "A positive attitude builds up, a negative attitude tears down."

Sample Drawing Assignment: Feeling Unloved, Hiding Behind a Bad Attitude.

3. Self Awareness:

* Self Awareness is knowing myself and being honest with myself.

Sample Topic Sentence: When I think about my behavior this past week, I can see both strengths and weaknesses.

Sample Drawing Assignment: Things About Me That I Really Like

4. Self Esteem:

* Self esteem is how I feel about myself (positive and negative).

* A sense of accomplishment is the feeling we experience when we complete a goal we have set for ourselves--a goal which is personally important to us.

Sample Topic Sentence: I'd like to write about what really makes me feel like trying harder than ever (at home, at school).

Sample Drawing Assignment: Times When I Should Feel Bad About My Behavior!

5. Self Discipline:

* Self Discipline is training yourself, rather than making others try to train you.

Sample Topic Sentence: I will describe how being unable to control my anger makes me feel.

Sample Drawing Assignment: Working Toward A Goal I'd Like To Reach

6. Communication:

*Good Communication consists of talking, listening, sharing, and asking for help.

Sample Topic Sentence: Sometimes I'm so frustrated that I just throw a fit instead of asking for help!

Sample Drawing Assignment: Asking for Help Because I Want To Change

7. Friendship:

* All of us need people with whom to share our lives and experiences.

Sample Topic Sentence: There are times when it's not right to be loyal to a friend--and it's important to know the difference.

Sample Drawing Assignment: The Good Heart: The Inside of a Kind Friend

8. Problem Solving:

* Choice: I have the power to choose positive or negative behaviors for myself.

* Consequence: What happens to me as a direct result of my choices.

* **Steps to Self Control:** (For when I am too angry / frustrated to problem solve)

1. Tell what you feel: "I feel: _____."
2. Tell what you need: "I need _____."
3. Tell what you will do: "I will _____."

* **Steps to Problem Solving:** (for when I am ready to think and to choose)

1. What is the problem?
2. What are the choices?
3. What are the consequences?
4. What do you choose to do?
5. How do you feel about your choice?

Sample Topic Sentence: I can only control my own behavior---I can't control other people's choices.

Sample Drawing Assignment: Trapped Like a Rat! and No One to Help Me!

* **Student Self Rating:** (Sample from Goal # 7, Friendship)

Am I building friendships?

Am I becoming someone others like to be around?

Have I learned not to manipulate people?

Have I learned not to let others manipulate me?

Appendix B, Attitudes of the "Heart:"

H: HERITAGE. Heritage involves who we are: yesterday, today, and who we will be tomorrow. Heritage deals with who we are as individuals, as families, as clans, or as nations. Heritage involves believing we have a tomorrow even if yesterday was not so great. Heritage involves taking steps to get to our tomorrow and allowing others to help us. Heritage involves bringing along the good from the past but also acknowledges the effects of the negative upon our lives. Heritage asks: "Where have I come from? Where do I want to go? How will this affect my people? What kind of people do I admire? What kind of people can help me discover myself more fully? Can I contribute to the search other people are experiencing?" Heritage says: "I am unique and have but myself to offer, but it is everything that I am and all that I have, and I am of worth."

E: ESTEEM. Esteem involves esteem for ourselves, others, our belief system, and the earth's resources. Esteem involves respecting myself enough to make positive choices for my life. Esteem involves treating myself and others with respect for their physical, emotional, and spiritual person. Esteem involves respecting my elders and learning about their lives and their ways. Esteem involves learning about my spiritual heritage and deciding how these values affect my life today. Esteem involves our communication by impacting the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual person of others. Esteem is enhanced by the clear conscience which arises from gentle and considerate respect for the personal freedom of others.

A: AWARENESS. Awareness involves being aware of ourselves (our own unique personhood), others (our interactions and our needs), and the real world (not the world we wish was out there, but the real world in all its harshness and beauty). Awareness involves designing goals for personal character development. Awareness asks: "What kind of person am I? What kind of person do I want to be? What is important to me? What kind of life do I want to have? Is it true that my goals are mine alone and do not have to be like anyone else's? How does this affect my place in the family and among my people?" Awareness says: "There are experiences which only I can create in my life. How can I create within this real world, and among the ways of my people, a lasting reality which will build my "Heart" and my life? I must live with what I choose to do or not do, with what I choose to contribute or to not contribute.

R: RISK TAKING and READINESS: Becoming ready to interact, learn, work, play, and discipline ourselves involves a certain amount of risk taking. We take risks when we learn and when we care about others. We become ready to build our lives by interacting, learning, working, playing, and disciplining ourselves. Risk Taking and Readiness says: My risks may be different from the risks other people face. My readiness and my timing may also be different from that of others. The important thing is that I become ready, that I take risks, in ways which complement the person I am because of the values I possess. I have the freedom to develop in my own ways. I will develop the confidence to design my own goals and to follow my own paths.

T: TRUTH: Truth involves seeking to fulfill the desire placed in all of us for truth and meaning in our lives. Truth involves living our lives on a deeper level, seeking excellence in our lives, becoming an individual, feeling unique. Truth can't be replicated, given, or passed down--truth can only be experienced. If the Heart is considered to be the seat of life or strength, then Truth must be the filling of the Heart. Truth fills our Heart and from this strength and this source we will live out our lives. Truth says: To find me you must seek me with all your Heart. A full Heart will be able to survive this life, to touch other lives, and to be a contributor rather than a taker. *

* "HEART," A Mutual Discovery: Developing Attitudes for Collaboration Across Cultures. Copyright by Laurie Fedje, January, 1991.

Appendix C: "Heart" Program Review

Sagewood Elementary, Casper, Wyoming

By Laurie Fedje, Copyright, January 1994

DOCUMENTATION: Skills Gains by outgoing 6th Graders

Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement, Age Norms, Grade Level Entry / Exit Scores

Code Name/ Disability	Time in Program	Subject	Grade Level Entry / Exit Scores	# Resource Classes in JHS
Cj LD/(ED)	8 months	Language	4.4--10.0	All: Residential ED
Ct (LD/ED)	1 year	Math	4.0--5.8	1 / 7
Ej (LD/ED)	5 months	Math	4.9--6.3	0 / 7
Jm (LD)	1 year	Reading Language Math	3.3--5.6 3.6--5.4 3.8--5.8	1/7
Lb (MD/ED)	8 months	Reading Language Math	2.6--3.3 3.0--3.8 2.8--3.0	4/7
Ak (ED/LD)	8 months	Reading Language Math	3.3--4.2 3.2--5.1 4.0--5.4	3/7
Kd (ED/LD)	8 months	Reading Language Math	4.2--6.9 4.4--7.6 4.9--6.3	1/7

Code Name/ Disability	Time in Program	Subject	Grade Level Entry / Exit	# Resource Classes in JHS
Sd (LD/ED)	7 months	Language	3.9--4.8	1/7
Tb (LD)	2 years	Reading Language	3.9--8.3 4.0--8.5	1/7
Ao (LD)	1 year, 7 mths.	Reading Language Math	3.3--5.6 3.0--6.3 4.4--5.4	1/7
C r (LD)	1 year, 4 mths.	Reading Language Math	6.2--8.3 4.4--5.1 4.4--5.8	1/7
Rh (LD)	1 year	Reading Language Math	5.6--9.2 5.6--7.0 6.3--8.0	2/7
KJ (ED/LD)	1 year	Reading Language Math	3.5--9.2 3.3--10.0 4.5--8.7	1/7

Language: Writing Sample Scores Reading: Pass. Comp. Sc. Math: Applied Problem Sc.

At this point we have documented only resource students gains in academic achievement and independence (being phased into and passing regular education classes). This year we are beginning to document the impact on regular class students as well. The impact of "Heart" on personal empowerment as judged by the number of resource classes students take in junior high school is as follows: 62% = 1 resource class, 7.6% = no resource class, 7.6% = 2 resource classes, 7.6% = 3 resource classes, 7.6 % = 4 resource classes, and 7.6% = residential setting. Although many factors influence success, parent feedback credits "Heart" with helping children to become responsible in making good choices in junior high school.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE
(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: RURAL PARTNERSHIPS: WORKING TOGETHER, Conference Proceedings of the 1994 American Council on Rural Special Education Conference	
Author(s): (Edited by Diane Montgomery)	
Corporate Source: American Council on Rural Special Education	Publication Date: March, 1994

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following options and sign the release below.

Sample sticker to be affixed to document

Check here
Permitting microfiche (4"x 6" film), paper copy, electronic, and optical media reproduction

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sample
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Level 1

Sample sticker to be affixed to document

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Sample
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

or here
Permitting reproduction in other than paper copy.

Level 2

Sign Here, Please

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."

Signature: Diane Montgomery	Position: Assitant Professor/Conference Chair
Printed Name: Diane Montgomery	Organization: Oklahoma State University/ACRES
Address: 306 N. Murray Hall ABSED-OSU Stillwater, OK 74078	Telephone Number: (405) 744-6036
	Date: April 11, 1994

ED 019557